The methods of transport in the countryside are related
489 to the distances to be traveled and the errands to be run. These things are matters of the organization and relationships of family and community. It is not only the means of transport which can be related to the constituent relationships of country social life. Each kind of farm product exported and farm need purchased involves a different distance of travel, a holder of a different status in family and community, and a different relation with the outsider.

489 The goods the farmer produces travel to the centers at
443 which they are exchanged over distances which are com-
438 mensurate with their value, their importance in farm economy, and their association with the status of the persons in the rural communities under whose charge they are produced. Horses take most care, are most valuable, and are the very special charge of the man of the house. The horse fair accordingly draws from the largest area. Cattle are the great money crop, the export staple. Accordingly the cattle fairs are among the chief lodestones of the larger centers, drawing from the deepest hinterlands of the major market areas. They are masculine affairs. Likewise potatoes and corn crops, oats, come to market only in the major centers. Farm fathers bring them down by horse and car from the deepest hinterlands.

Pigs represent a much shorter period of work and care. They are often in woman's province. The pig fairs are smaller gatherings, held in small centers, drawing from small hinterlands. Lesser vegetables, principally cabbage, travel no such distance as potatoes, and women often sell them. Finally, butter and eggs travel the shortest distance of all. They are often bartered at the crossroad centers. Before creameries were introduced, salted firkins or tubs of butter, representing a longer accumulation, went longer distances to the village centers.

234 Creamery associations were not established until the
438 middle of the time of research in County Clare. They are

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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415 though it may be put to the less innocent purpose of preparing malt for poteen, and a spinning-wheel of the usual type. For light at night
373 modern lamps are coming into use, but in many houses the "flare" is used. It consists of a rude sconce, in which is fastened a cylindrical reservoir for oil, closed at the top by a lid, and having a spout like that of a coffee-pot, through which the wick is drawn. Rush lights are still used by some.

342 The house is often whitewashed outside; the roof is thatch, of straw in most localities, but on the islands, and some places in the peninsula, bent is use instead. This is laid on over "scraws" of grass-turf and fastened down by sougans (straw ropes), the ends of which may be attached to pegs driven into the walls, or have long pieces of
[284] wood or heavy stones fastened to them. These ropes are often arranged in a net work so as to hold the thatch more securely. Coir rope, bought in Belmullet, is now used by some instead of sougans. The gable is stepped or cut away so that the thatch does not project over the end wall.

There are several other types of houses, though the style just described is the most common. Most of the newer houses and those building have chimneys, pig-styes of turf or stone, and in some cases byres. Few of the old one-roomed dwellings, built partly or altogether of turf, are still to be seen, but there are a number of one-roomed huts of stone, many of which have no windows.

The most primitive habitations in the district, and perhaps in Ireland, are the rude huts (*boolies*) on Inishglora, inhabited during the lobster fishing season by the men of Inishkea; they are about a dozen in number, rudely built of dry stone and thatched with "scraws." There is not room to stand upright in them, the height from floor to roof being about 5 feet. Internally they contain a rude bunk filled with straw for sleeping in and a few large stones to sit upon. Cooking appears to be done out of doors. Successive batches of men live in these huts for about three months of the year. Some of the poorest houses on the mainland are in the isolated and primitive village of Fallmore, where few of the dwellings have windows and few or none chimneys. The houses on the islands are decidedly among the best in the district. Many are whitewashed inside, and the furniture is of a superior class, abundant material being thrown up as drift wood. The beds are four-posted structures, with flat board tops, and some of them have bright-coloured curtains, and the bedding is clean and tidy-looking.

489 6. *Transport.*—Lying as it does far from towns of any size, and separated from the nearest by a wide stretch of wild and thinly-

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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populated country, the district under consideration is practically isolated, and communication with other parts of the country is carried on by road or by sea. Mails and passengers are carried daily to and from Ballina and Belmullet by a good two-horse (Bianconi) stage-car; and a similar vehicle, an opposition venture, also makes the journey daily with passengers and light goods. The country beyond Belmullet is provided with mails twice weekly. Goods are conveyed by carts from Ballina, a distance of over forty miles, during the winter and spring, and large sailing boats are sometimes employed carrying heavy goods from Westport. But few wheeled-vehicles are used except by the better-to-do, and in the remoter parts hardly any are employed, turf, sea-weed, &c., being carried in cleaves or pardoges (panniers with movable bottoms, slung over the backs of horses or donkeys). The people, if poor, have to walk; those better off may ride to market. It is common for two to ride the one horse, a man in the saddle and a woman *en croupe*, or both equestrians may be women, in which case, sometimes, but very rarely, the woman in front may ride astride.

The main roads are pretty good, but many of the smaller ones are very little used, except at harvest time or when turf is being got in, and as a result are grass-grown and uneven. Some small fishing hamlets and outlying places are still unprovided with roads.

For water transport there are the sailing boats before mentioned, used for the conveyance of goods from Westport. The form of boat most in use is the curragh, which is manned by three men; it varies somewhat in pattern in different localities.

In the Mullet and the islands 142 curraghs are in use. Very few boats of other patterns are kept, as there are only three second-class boats (yawls), and about thirty third-class. At Portacloy there are about 30 curraghs.

The southern part of the peninsula and the islands obtain their turf supply by boat from Achill and Ballycroy.

V.—FOLK-LORE.

Although poor in so many other respects, Erris is particularly rich in folk-lore, many old customs, traditions, and beliefs, which have died out, or are dying elsewhere, still flourishing there. The legends and tales of the past and many old songs are still current, especially among the older people, who, however, will not readily communicate them to strangers, so that only a resident well acquainted with Irish

657 erality. Houses, farms more than twice the size of those normal before the days of the Congested Districts Board, doles to those needing them from November to April, subsidized schemes of building walls that seem in places scarcely necessary, and no direct taxation—all contribute to the general social welfare. In addition the family allowances and old age pensions help in many households, but these are general state benefits. During the winter many householders are short of money, once the money for the stock has been spent.[30]

167 Second, emigration has been of vast benefit to the community; money comes 434 in to most of the homes from America[31] or Britain, or both. And emigration has made possible the making of farms which, with the use of commonage, can hardly support a family in comfort but can give basic sustenance; though, as more and more farms are united, some men will prosper, especially those who fish as well as farm.

443 Third, it is regrettable that the lack of commercial facilities means that eggs, ● 489 poultry, butter, and other produce cannot be sold; in many parts of Ireland the sale of eggs to grocers and milk to

[273] [30] The consumption of stout at the only inn averages eight barrels a week in summer, but only three barrels a week in winter. The standard [304] content of a barrel is 256 pints.
[31] Many of the children are dressed in Amer- [291] ican clothes.

[p. 209(A)]

443 creameries or to dealers brings useful
● 489 income. The difficulty lies in transport, especially during the winter when the isolation is most acutely felt.

484 Fourth, remote and isolated as their island may be, some of its people have seen much of the world. It is unlikely that many of the young people will remain here in the future; on the other hand, some former emigrants have come back to rest with thankfulness after their labors elsewhere. As one of them said, "America is a good place for the young, but this is a good place when you're old."

000 To summarize, Inishbofin now is neither a tragic island nor a romantic enclave of ancient ways. It is an area in which the work begun by the Congested Districts Board has borne fruit, whose people live reasonably well by crofting standards thanks to the help of emigrants and of the state. So long as the fuel holds out, there seems to be no reason why this island should not remain inhabited; but the problems of so curious a population age structure (p. 208) need investigation by a sociologist, and the cost of maintaining this community to the state and its relatives could well form a subject for an economist. For this island is not, and presumably cannot be, self-supporting under modern conditions.

[p. 209(B)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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from it. The Gaelic conquest of the Irish Midlands was not completed until the sixth century A.D., and down to the Anglo-Norman invasions the distinction between free and tributary tribes remained.[1] The counties bordering the middle Shannon—Leitrim, Roscommon, Longford and the western parts of Westmeath and Offaly—are probably as full of survivals as any in Ireland. This is the land of the loy and the steeveen (Chapter X) and the last home of many an ancient custom. The lowland of which it is the centre is floored with limestone levelled off at about 200 ft. but diversified by occasional low hills, by intricate solution lakes and by glacial eskers and drifts among which lie countless small lakes and bogs (Fig. 3). It is hard to realize the isolation from which this area suffered before the introduction of improved wheeled vehicles and the coming of the canal and the railway.[2]

Let us now look at the cultural landscape which the hand of man has fitted to the physical frame of the island. Although man has been in this country for only a fraction of the time he has occupied South England and the continent, his mark is everywhere. Wander where you will through the length and breadth of the island, and through the dozens of lesser isles around its shores, and you will never fail to see traces of human activity, past or present, even in the most empty and inaccessible spots. Apart from the more or less datable remains of church and rath, castle and cairn, the land is covered with the marks of man's toil. The history of rural Ireland could be read out of doors, had we the skill, from the scrawlings made by men in the field boundaries of successive periods. In them the unlettered countryman wrote his runes on the land. The student of historical geography has been greatly assisted in the task of interpreting this palimpsest by the new tool of air-photography which, given suitable conditions, will pick out all man-made marks on the face of the earth.

The sturdy field walls and hedged banks which give the countryside its intimate character are by no means as immutable

[1] T. F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (1946), 204.

[2] Improvements in public transport were initiated by the Italian, Bianconi, who, profiting from the cavalry horses thrown on the market after the Napoleonic wars, began his famous fleet of 'cars' in Tipperary in 1815.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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XIII

CARS AND CARTS

PEASANT communities concerned primarily with livestock which can be moved on the hoof have little need for elaborate means of transport. Long-tried devices adapted to the difficulties of the terrain continue to be used even in this age of tractors, and Ireland can show a remarkable variety of archaic farm vehicles of simple types. The heavy lumbering wagon would be out of place and out of scale in this environment. It is included in medieval inventories of manors and monasteries but it never took hold of the country, and although some landlords re-introduced English farm wagons in the eighteenth century, they were soon 'laid aside'.[1] The common Irish car was better adapted to the needs and skills of the people as well as to the condition of the roads.

The Irish low-back car, which is not yet extinct, is a light vehicle fitted with block wheels rigidly attached to a rotating axle (Fig. 55). Arthur Young commented that the loads they carried were 'such as an Englishman would be ashamed to take in a wheelbarrow'.[2] Yet he praised them because they required only one horse and did little damage to the roads. Prior to the eighteenth century there were very few roads except for those connecting the towns, and it seems that even the humble low-back cars were rare outside the urban spheres. For farm-work the wheel-less slide-car was used almost everywhere, supplemented by sledges, panniers, back-creels, and burden-ropes. It was progressive landlords who initiated, in the interests of the new agriculture, the construction of roads on their estates; and

[1] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, 22.
[2] Ibid., 2, 59.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

the famous cattle droves.[1] The town lies on one of the sinuous gravel ridges (eskers) which lead eastwards from the limestone grazing grounds of east Galway to the crossing of the Shannon and then thread their way through a maze of bogs to reach the headwaters of the Irish Sea rivers. The eskers provide dry footing for roads some of which are routeways of great antiquity, and down to the coming of railways they served as drove roads along which cattle and sheep were taken to the fattening pastures and markets of the eastern lowlands. The date of the great fair of Ballinasloe, in early October, corresponds with that of the largest trysts at Crieff and Falkirk, and would have allowed time for the movement of livestock to eastern Ireland or to the English fairs by All-Hallows or Martinmas.

No study of the Irish drove roads has been made as for those of Scotland and Wales, but it seems probable that the movement of livestock along routes from west to east has been developing since the Middle Ages, when its logical outcome was the export trade in hides from the Irish Sea ports. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries exports largely took the form of salt beef and butter, but since the early nineteenth century the store cattle trade has been so dominant that it has latterly accounted for half the total export trade of southern Ireland. It involves a movement of cattle not only from west to east but from small farms to large, and from scanty grazings to the lush fattening pastures of Meath or the English lowlands. Apart from small strings of beasts on their way to local fairs, the cattle droves are today most in evidence in the crowded dockside streets of the ports where they are herded on to the cross-channel boats, but until quite recently donkeys and goats purchased at fairs in the west still travelled to the ports on the hoof. The drover-dealers who accompanied them were colourful characters whose experience stood them in good stead in the wider world. These dealers in the unwanted residues of the countryside—in rags and scrap as well as asses and goats—have often set up as rag-and-scrap merchants in the large towns along their routes from Belfast and Dublin to the English fairs, and one of them became Lord Mayor of a Scottish city. Others made big money as pedlars of cloth in America or Australia. Most of these 'pahvees',

[1] A. R. B. Haldane, *The Drove Roads of Scotland.*

[1] [i.e., Ballinasloe.—Analyst]